CLAIMS

1. Computer software which includes an executable program which requires access to at least one sub-routine during execution, the software further including the or each of the sub-routines in encrypted form, and further including a decryption routine operable to convert the encrypted sub-routines to an executable form, at least when access is required.

2. The software of claim 1, wherein the decryption routine is executed whenever the program is executed, whereby to recreate the sub-routines in executable form on each occasion.

3. The software of claim 1, wherein the decryption routine makes an entry in an address table to identify the location of a recreated sub-routine, the address table being accessible by the program for locating sub-routines for access when required.

4. The software of claim 1, wherein the decryption routine is operable to detect the presence of a sub-routine already available within a system running the software, and to cause the executable program to use a sub-routine if already available.

5. The software according of claim 4, wherein the decryption routine is operable to incorporate within the address table an address for a sub-routine already available, whereby decryption of a further copy of the sub-routine is not required.

6. The software of claim 1, wherein the decryption routine is operable to discriminate between different versions of a sub-routine, whereby to decrypt an encrypted version in the event that only a different version is available within the system.

7. The software of claim 1, further incorporating an encrypted copy of the executable program, the decryption routine being operable to decrypt an

executable copy of the program.

8. The software of claim 7, wherein the decryption routine is operable to decrypt a copy of the executable program in the event that an unencrypted copy contained within the software is detected as being corrupt.

9. The software of claim 1, wherein encryption and decryption include or consist of compression or decompression techniques.

10. A computer readable medium, having a program recorded thereon, wherein the program comprises computer software according to claim 1.

11. A computer system comprising processing means operable to execute software, and at least one piece of computer software according to claim 1.

12. A computer system operable to execute an executable program, the system including:

first store means containing computer readable code representing the executable program;

loading means operable to load the code for execution;

identifying means operable to identify any sub-routines required by the executable program during execution thereof;

second store means containing computer readable code representing the or each sub-routine identified by the identifying means;

and second loading means operable to load from the second store means the or each sub-routine in the event that the sub-routine is not available elsewhere within the system.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the identifying means and second loading means are operated on each occasion that execution of the executable program is initiated, whereby to make the sub-routines available on each occasion.

14. The system of claim 12, wherein the second loading means makes an

entry in an address table to identify the location of a sub-routine which has been made available, the address table being accessible by the executable program for locating sub-routines for access when required.

15. The system of claim 12, wherein the second loading means are operable to detect the presence of a sub-routine already available within the system, and to cause the executable program to use the sub-routine if already available.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein the second loading means is operable to incorporate within the address table an address for a sub-routine available elsewhere within the system.

17. The system of claim 12, wherein the second loading means is operable to discriminate between different versions of a sub-routine, whereby to decrypt and encrypted version in the event that only a different version is available elsewhere within the system.

18. The system of claim 12, wherein the second store means further contains computer readable code representing the executable program, and the second loading means is operable to load the executable program from the second store means in the event that the executable program is not available elsewhere within the system.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the executable program is held within the second store means in encrypted form, and the second loading means is operable to decrypt the copy, in the event that a copy of the executable program available elsewhere within the system is detected as being corrupt.

20. The system of claim 12, wherein encryption and decryption include or consist of compression or decompression techniques.

21. A method of installing a piece of computer software, comprising:

1. Installing an executable program of the type which requires access to at least one sub-routine during execution:

2. Decrypting an encrypted copy of the sub-routine; and

3. Installing the decrypted copy for access by the executable program.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the steps of decrypting and installing are executed on each occasion the executable program is required to be executed.

23. The method of claim 21, wherein the method further comprises the steps of identifying any sub-routines already installed and available to the executable program, and decrypting and installing only the or any required sub-routine which is not so available.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the step of identifying sub-routines already available includes discriminating between different versions of a sub-routine, whereby to decrypt an encrypted version in the event that only a different version is already available.

25. The method of claim 21, wherein the method further comprises the step of assessing the executable program for corruption, and decrypting and installing a further copy of the executable program for use in the event that corruption is detected.

26. The method of claim 21, wherein encryption and decryption includes or consists of compression or decompression techniques.